



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Miami college students march to U.S. Capitol in support of immigrant rights (Trail Of Dreams), 2010

1 January

2010

to: 1 May

2010

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: *Miami, Florida to Washington, D.C.*

Location Description: *Events took place at many points along the way from Miami to Washington, D.C.*

Goals:

To stop the deportations of current undocumented students. To support the passage of the Dream Act. To force President Barack Obama and Congress to take up comprehensive immigration reform.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches
- 048. Protest meetings
- 141. Civil disobedience of "illegitimate" laws › This was done by the students advertising their "illegal" and undocumented status

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 013. Deputations
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches
- 048. Protest meetings
- 050. Teach-ins

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 013. Deputations
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 4th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches

Methods in 5th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches

Methods in 6th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 013. Deputations
- 015. Group lobbying
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Human Rights

National/Ethnic Identity

Group characterization:

- Undocumented students

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Felipe Matos, Gaby Pacheco, Carlos Roa, Juan Rodriguez

Partners:

Students Working For Equal Rights, Florida Immigration Coalition

External allies:

New York State Youth Leadership Council, The National Day Laborer Organizing Network - Puente, Farmworker Association of Florida, NAACP

Involvement of social elites:

Not known.

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- El Sol Workers' Centre
- El Sol Workers' Centre (Exit)

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- NAACP
- NAACP (Exit)

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: *Approximately 3 weeks*

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

U.S. Federal Government; President Barack Obama; State Governments of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Ku Klux Klan; Sheriff Butch Conway in Gwinnett County, Georgia.

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Rally

Campaigner violence:

None known

Repressive Violence:

None known

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

In 2001, Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois and Rep. Howard Berman of California introduced a piece of proposed legislation named The DREAM, (acronym for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act. Under the proposed Dream Act undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally under parental supervision, would have an opportunity to obtain conditional U.S. citizenship with the possibility of achieving full citizenship upon completion of the process and by finally completing either two years of college or two years in the military. After meeting all the necessary criteria and achievements and upon being approved, the undocumented immigrant would be able to apply for full U.S. citizenship. However, by 2010 this act had not been passed.

On January 1, 2010, in Miami, Florida, four students from Miami-Dade County College, Gaby Pacheco, 24, Carlos Roa, 22, Felipe Matos, 23, and Juan Rodriguez, 20, began a 1,500 mile walk to Washington, D.C. in protest of the U.S. policy towards undocumented students. Three of the four students had been brought to the U.S. illegally when they were young and were undocumented immigrants; the fourth student, formerly undocumented, had recently obtained U.S. residency. Their main intent was to promote human rights, support the Dream Act, and stop the deportation of current undocumented students.

The walkers began their journey, known as ‘The Trail Of Dreams Walk’, at the Miami Freedom Tower, in Miami, Florida. They then continued their journey through several small towns and cities as they travelled through Florida. On January 7 in Jupiter, they were joined for supper by approximately 70 supporters at the El Sol Workers’ Center, and then again on January 12 in Vero Beach they were joined for supper by members of The Farmworker Association Of Florida.

On Monday, January 18, the walkers arrived at St. Augustine, Florida, to commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Here community leaders and residents held a rally in their honor. On January 19, in Orange County, the walkers met with members of the House of Representatives and several Florida Senators. On February 2 and 3 in Mayo, Florida, the Dreamers had dinner with community members and participated in a town meeting, and Know Your Rights training for undocumented immigrants. In Tallahassee, Florida, on February 10, they met with legislators and the Governor.

As the Dreamers passed through Georgia on February 20, they joined with the NAACP in opposition to a Ku Klux Klan rally being held in Nahunta. On March 1, the walkers arrived in Gwinnett County and, risking arrest and possible deportation, tried to meet with Sherriff R.L. “Butch” Conway about the need to reform the U.S. immigration system. Conway was a well-known supporter of “287(G),” a federal provision authorizing local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws. Conway refused to meet with them, but they were able to meet with one of his deputies. As the Dreamers passed through Atlanta they were able to stop and speak to several local politicians and the mayor.

In mid March the walkers left Georgia and entered South Carolina. Their route through here took them via several towns and cities such as Anderson, Greenville, Columbia, Spartanburg, Lockhart, Rock Hill, and Wilmington. In several of these places they were able to talk to individual people and to small groups of both opposition and supporters of their cause.

After South Carolina the walkers entered North Carolina, and on March 28 they made it to Charlotte as planned. Here they joined in solidarity with the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace. This was an annual event that had been taking place for the previous 24 years. Local organizers gave the dreamers the opportunity to join their pilgrimage around their state and learn from their experiences and their stories. All of the walkers were impressed by the beautiful display of diversity and solidarity that they

witnessed. In the crowd were immigrants from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, as well as people from the African American and Caucasian community. As the pilgrims walked through a rainy downtown Charlotte they chanted "Education Not Deportation". The Dreamers stopped in front of the local jail where many immigrants are detained, even though nearly 90% of them had no criminal record whatsoever.

The final week of their walk began with their arrival in Washington D.C. However, in Washington things did not go all as planned when their support vehicle, an old Ford R.V., was broken into and laptops, a GPS unit, and cell phone chargers were subsequently stolen. The computers were how they documented their journey on Facebook and Twitter, gathered 30,000 signatures along their walk to bring to the president, and marshaled support and shelter along the way. One of the students, Gaby Pacheco, called the police and it was only when the dispatcher asked her her name that she hesitated. The irony made her smile. There she was, an illegal immigrant calling the police. But she realized that she was in a 'Secure Community,' which is the federal program being implemented in local jurisdictions to streamline the process of deporting illegal immigrants convicted of serious crimes. After waiting an hour for officers to come, the group decided to drive the RV to the police station. Pacheco told the desk officer, "We're students and we're undocumented." "I understand totally," he said, not at all interested, and then took detailed notes on the theft. This event demonstrated to Gaby the vast differences in attitudes among U.S. law enforcement officials towards undocumented persons.

The walkers requested a meeting with President Obama, which was refused. However, the White House did offer for them to meet with senior adviser Valerie Jarrett. The students declined the offer as they said that they believed in Obama's campaign promises to support the Dream Act and so it was to him that they wished to speak. On Wednesday, April 28, they drove to the White House to deliver a sample of their petition asking President Obama to stop the deportation of students like them. A uniformed Secret Service agent declined to accept the envelope.

By Friday, April 30, the students had walked as far as Chirilagua, the Salvadoran neighborhood of Alexandria, where they were welcomed on Monday evening by more than 200 people at the headquarters of Tenants and Workers United. On the morning of Saturday May 1, 2010 the four student walkers walked the last four miles from Alexandria to the White House where the walkers then held an early morning press conference between East and West Executive Avenues, situated close to the White House. At the press conference the walkers were joined by immigration reform allies from the Florida Immigrant Coalition, Students Working for Equal Rights, Presente.org, and others. The Dreamers finally completed their journey by walking with many immigrant students and allies to the National Press Club. Organizers of the rally stated that "dozens" of protesters were citizens committed civil disobedience and risked arrest to call attention to the cause.

Although the 'Trail of Dreams Walk' did not directly achieve any of its originally stated goals it did stimulate others into action in support of its cause. One such action was 'The Trail of Dreams New York'. (TODNY). This action involved several marchers – Marisol Ramos, Gabriel Martinez, Jose Luis, Martin Lopez, and Daniela Hidalgo – walking 250 miles from New York to Washington D.C. During the course of and as a result of their walk, major gains were achieved in support of the Dream Act. These included Senator Frank Lautenberg of NJ, Representative Pascrell of NJ, Representative Payne of NJ, Representative Hinchey of NY, Representative Brady of NJ, and Representative Edwards of MD all becoming co-sponsors of the Dream Act. Apart from speaking with people they met along their route, the TODNY walkers also held events on college campuses and at community organizations.

Another action was performed by a group of college students who gathered at the Arizona state capitol on the morning of Monday, September 27, 2010, to garner support for the DREAM Act. Calling themselves the Dream Army, the students were trying to persuade Senator John McCain, R-Arizona, to vote for the bill.

At the time of writing, the movement to support the Dream Act is still active. On April 17, 2012, after walking 150 miles, fifteen undocumented youth and supporters from the New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC) arrived in Albany, New York. They began their journey on April 9 in an effort to gather more support from Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature for the New York Dream Act. This state bill, which was introduced in March 2011 by Senator Perkins and Assemblyman Linares, would provide access to state-funded financial aid and scholarships to qualifying undocumented youth.

Research Notes

Influences:

This campaign influenced future Trail of Dreams walks and actions around the Dream Act, including Trail of Dreams - New York (1).

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Trail Of Dreams. 24 Feb 2012 <<http://trail2010.org>>

Additional Notes:

The walk was called the 'The Trail of Dreams' walk, the title of which was derived from the forced march and relocation of Native Americans, called the Trail of Tears, from parts of the southeastern U.S. under the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and its main aims were to promote human rights, call for immigration reform, stop the deportations of undocumented students who were currently in the U.S., and to support the DREAM Act. Juan Rodriguez, one of the walkers, outlined the Trail of Dreams standpoint in four statements: WE MUST respect the rights of workers; WE MUST fulfill equal accessibility to education; WE MUST have a just and humane pathway to full citizenship; WE MUST protect the sacred bonds and unity of our families!

The five key requirements that potential applicants for the Dream Act must meet are:

1. They must have entered the U.S. before the age of 16.
2. They must have been present in the U.S. for at least five consecutive years prior to the enactment of the bill.

3. They must have graduated from a United States High School or obtained GED, or have been accepted into an institution of higher education.

4. They must be between the ages of 12 and 35.

5. They must have good moral character.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Peter J. Saunders, 25/02/2012

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